RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 30th December, 1993 The

House met at eleven of the clock,

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

CORRECTING THE REPLY TO S. Q. NO. 124 ANSWERED ON 10TH DECEMBER, 1993

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P. K. THUNGON) : Madam, I beg to correct the statement laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on 10th December, 1993 in reply to the Starred Question No. 124 (Priority No. 4) regarding completion of Sardar Sarovar Project Dam in Gujarat as follows :

Part of the answer (e) & (f) .....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You need not read it out. You just lay it on the Table.

SHRI P. K. THUNGON Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a statement correcting the answer to the Starred Question No. 124 answered in the Rajya Sabha on 10th December, 1993 regarding completion of Sardar Sarovar Project Dam in Gujarat. (Placed in Library. *See No. LT*-5261|93).

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

CORRECTING THE REPLY TO UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 635 ANSWERED ON 30TH APRIL, 1993.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. K. THUNGON) : Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a statement fin

English and Hindi) correcting the reply given in the Rajya Sabha on the 30th April, 1993 to Unstarred Question 635 regarding flats and bungalows occupied by ex-Members of Parliament, former Ministers, etc. (Placed in Library. *See No. L*T-5262(93).

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH (MAHARASHTRA) : Madam Deputy Chairman, I seek your protection. This is correcting the reply to my Unstarred Question of 30th April in which there were certain inaccuracies, if I may be permitted to put it. I have given notice of breach of privilege on 12th May. It took some time between the Secretariat of the House and the Ministry and after my reminder on 16th August the Secretariat sent me the reply of the Minister. By my letter of 19th August I pointed out the inaccuracies in that also. I sent a reminder on 4th September on the fareaoh of privilege notice. I sent another reminder on 15th December on the bleach of privilege notice. So far that has sot been decided. The point is whether this htm. House should eight months after a reply was given and after a breach of privilege notice was given, let the Minister correct the inaccuracies. The House was misinformed. I am not saying that it was done deliberately. It is for the Privileges Committee to find it out. I can understand the first correction on another matter because it was on 10th December and it is being corrected on 30th December. That is understandable. It is my information even this reply contains some factual inaccuracies. So, my submission is that if this hon. House is to be given replies which are not accurate and for which action cannot be taken, it is only the Chairperson who can give protection to the House and see that the Ministers give correct replies. If the replies are not correct, let the Privileges Committee be seized of it. After eight months some kind of a, if I may be permitted to say, whitewashing effort is on. There was a half-an-hour discussion on this very subject last

yeas. Even the Chair made certain comments on the way in which the Urban Development Department was functioning with regard to allotment of house etc. The hon. Prime Minister bad written twice to those who were occupying the houses and misusing them and yet the hon. Minister is permitted to make a correction 8 months after which correction itself may not be correct. How should we deal with this and how should the House take up this matter ? In fact, if the Chairman of the House Committee had been here—this is not a partisan matter—hon. Mr. Sahu would have also indicated what the inaccuracies were. As is pointed out, there are factual inaccuracies in the reply of 16th August and yet, after 8 months, on 30th December, on the last day, during the extended session, that reply is being corrected. So, I seek your protection, Madam.

SHRI M. A. BABY (KERALA) : Madam, just a minute. It is a serious matter.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It was his question.

SHRI M. A. BABY : It is with regard to this. The point is that this correction, this inadequate and specious correction could not have been made even during the Winter Session. It may have been given only in the Budget Session. Because of the scam a special sitting of the House is there now and that opportunity is being utilised by the Minister ; otherwise, as a matter of course, it may have been given only during the Budget Session. If this kind of lackadaisical handling is going to be there, then the relevance of the House itself would diminish to that extent.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : The accuracy of the corrected answer needs to be checked.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mantri ji do you want to comment on it ? Because the Member had raised a matter of privilege on the same issue. It is still pending with the Chairman.

This is the second time when the same question has been brought back in this House for corrections.

SHRI P.K. THUNGON : Madam, I am quite agree with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member. There were some mistakes in it. That is why I have come forward with statements correcting answers to questions. Madam, the mistake occurred inadvertently because this was a kind of procedural and technical mistake. The eviction report was to be given to some authority. But instead of giving that information to the concerned authority the hon. Member or the outgoing Member, gave it to another authority. That is how this problem was created. But as far as the interests of the hon. Members are concerned, we take utmost care so that their interests are least jeopardised.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : Madam. I would like to make two points. My first point is : Why did it take six months ? Secondly, I am making a statement with full responsibility that It was not a mistake, it was a fraud and this fraud continued. I repeat that it was a fraud and the fraud continued. It is for the House to decide how this matter should be taken up. It is for the Privileges Committee to see whether my information is correct or not. I am makmg this statement with full responsibility. I again repeat that it was a fraudulent transaction. When the discussion took place in this House, Shri Ram Jethmalani had also mentioned that the matter went to the Prime Minister also there were several lacunae in it, that the Department concerned was in collusion with the concerned people to let the matter go on for months together that the houses were not vacated, etc. Madam, if you see this very case, you will find how this fraud has been perpetrated. ***(.Interruptions).***

AN HON. MEMBER : It is a system failure.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (Uttar Pradesh) : Madam, fraud' is a very strong word. Who has committed this fraud ? If it is an allegation against the Minister then it is a very fundamental charge. Is it a general fraud ? Or, is it a fraud committed by the Minister ? The Member should specify that.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : It is a fraud committed by the concerned Ministry.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Andhra Pradesh) : Madam, the hon. Member has said "It is a system fraud". But it is a systemic fraud.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : As far as the privilege matter is concerned, it is with the Chairman. Whatever desision he takes, I will inform the Member.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : My point is this. The hon. Minister has made this statement. If this statement also contains inaccuracies, then what would you do ? Would you be seized of it ? The privilege notice was given on 12th May. Even we have reminded them several times. We do not know why it has not been dealt with.

SHRI P. K. THUNGON : Madam, we have gone into the matter in great detail. I can assure the House that wherever the mistake was committed, wherever the technical mistake was committed, we arc taking action on that.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Maharashtra) : Is it a technical mistake or a non-technical mistake ? *(Interruptions).*

SHRI P. K. THUNGON : I have already explained it. I appreciate the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member. J accept that at that time a wrong statement was made. That is why I have come forward with this statement.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : Madam, why did it take six months ?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I will find out.

SHRI P. K. THUNGON : It took time because we went into the case m great detail. So that we could fix the responsibility.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : Madam, I would like to correct myself. It took eight months, not six months.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : A lot of corrections are coming from both sides. Mr. Minister, this matter is being raised many times in this House. We have seen many corrections in it I found the Members very agitated on it. Could you give an assurance on the floor of the House that such mistakes would not occur again and the House does not have to spend 10 minutes on it ?

SHRI P. K. THUNGON : Madam, we will take utmost care in future.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Shah, about your privilege matter, we will inform you later,

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Report and Accounts (1992-93) of the International Airports Authority of India and related papers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED) : On behalf of SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : I lay on the Table, under sub-section (4) of section 24 and sub-section (2) of section 25 of the International Airports Authority Act, 1971, a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers :—

(i) Annual Report and Accounts of the International Airports Authority of India, for the year 1992-93, together with the Audit Report on the Accounts.